

Connecticut



State
Rehabilitation
Council

2004
ANNUAL REPORT



December 2004

I am pleased to bring you the Connecticut State Rehabilitation Council's Annual Report for the federal fiscal year 2003-2004.

This has been a time of transition for the State Rehabilitation Council (the Council) since the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) was without a permanent director since June of last year. As Council Chair, I was honored to participate as a full partner in the hiring process of the new director, and am very pleased with the outcome.

Despite the lack of permanent leadership in BRS this past year, the Council accomplished many of its stated goals. The Council implemented a consumer satisfaction survey and presented the results to BRS. The Council established links with the Connecticut Business Leadership Network. Outreach was conducted to nominees with particular emphasis on recruiting minorities and to broaden business and industry representation. Most importantly, the Council revised the Policy and Planning Committee to be more active in advocating for quality employment services for persons with disabilities.

The Council met five times in the past year in full Council meetings. The work of the Council takes place within a committee structure that includes Consumer Satisfaction; Business Partnership; Intercouncil Coordination and Nominations; and Legislation, Policy and Planning. Meetings were held in different locations throughout Connecticut so that local BRS staff could participate.

The Council membership is comprised of many vocational rehabilitation role models. They represent individuals who have succeeded in working with BRS to obtain and maintain employment. They also represent individuals who have chosen to work in professions that assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining meaningful employment. The membership is the key component to ensuring that BRS is working well with the Council in achieving satisfactory outcomes.

This next year will be one of opportunity for the Council. The leadership of the Council as well as BRS has changed. With this change, comes hope of the continuation of a strong partnership between BRS and the Council. I am confident that those who will assume these new leadership positions will work hard to ensure appropriate and meaningful careers for individuals who have disabilities, and will approach their responsibilities with great commitment and care.

Sincerely,

Linda A. Wallace
Chairperson, Connecticut State Rehabilitation Council

Mission of the State Rehabilitation Council

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides assessment, advice and recommendations to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and others regarding coordination and effectiveness of programs and strategies which promote community-based competitive employment for persons with disabilities.

Goals of the State Rehabilitation Council

To assess the effectiveness and delivery of vocational services provided by BRS to individuals with disabilities.

To improve the coordination of vocational services among BRS, state agencies and public and private entities for the benefit of consumers of BRS.

To make recommendations to the Governor, BRS and others for developing and improving strategies for the employment of, and vocational services for, individuals with disabilities.

Functions of the State Rehabilitation Council

To review, analyze, and advise the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services regarding its performance in carrying out its responsibilities as the state agency designated to administer the public Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

To provide input to BRS in preparing the State Plan for vocational rehabilitation services, as well as other plans, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations.

To provide input to BRS regarding the Bureau's coordination activities with Connecticut's workforce investment system.

To review the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with, the performance of the Bureau and other public and private agencies in providing vocational rehabilitation services to Connecticut residents with disabilities.

To prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor of Connecticut and the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

To coordinate with other advisory councils in the state which oversee services to individuals with disabilities.

To perform other functions as appropriate to the mission of the Council.

State Rehabilitation Council Committee Reports

Consumer Satisfaction

Purpose:

To assess consumers' views of vocational rehabilitation, including evaluating the effectiveness of VR in assisting consumers to obtain and maintain employment.

Chairperson:

Lee Nosal

Members:

Kenn Messman, Linda Wheeler-Donahue

2004 Accomplishments:

- Assisted the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services with the New England Regional Consumer Satisfaction Survey
- The survey was conducted and the results presented to the Council and the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

2005 Key Goals:

- Assist with the implementation of the next consumer satisfaction survey or other consumer satisfaction survey methods
- Use the results of the next survey to plan for future assessments as needed

Intercouncil Coordination/Nominations

Purpose:

To foster linkages with other councils that oversee or have input into the provision of rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities, to plan training for Council members to foster effective council teamwork, and to recruit new members to help plan and implement SRC goals.

Chairperson:

Mike Valuckas

Members:

Jerry Koret, Nancy Blackwell-Todd

2004 Accomplishments:

- Conducted outreach to nominees for appointment to the Council with particular emphasis on meeting legislative requirements
- Organized orientation program for new members.
- Developed and implemented a mentoring program for new members to instill proactive positioning from both new and existing members

2005 Key Goals:

- Conduct outreach to nominees for appointment to the Council with particular emphasis on meeting legislative requirements
- Enhance recruiting efforts to broaden the base of experience to a greater community
- Further develop the mentoring program into a “buddy” system to ensure continuity and a proactive approach as an ongoing effort for all members

Legislation, Policy and Planning

Purpose:

To assist in developing the state and strategic plans for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. To keep updated on federal and state regulations of persons with disabilities.

Chairpersons:

Lois Rosenwald and Raymond Venter

Members:

Pearl Brooks, Brita Darany, Ann Seigel, and Susan Werboff

2004 Accomplishments:

- Rejoined the Policy and Planning Committee with the Legislation Committee to strengthen the SRC resources
- Reviewed the State Plan and provided feedback to BRS
- Hosted a public forum

2005 Key Goals:

- Host at least three regional public forums
- Incorporate feedback from the public forums into the State Plan
- Review and provide recommendations to the State Plan
- Research the use of a lobbyist to review best ways to use SRC resources to educate the public on the needs of BRS and its consumers
- Establish a means of dialogue with the Governor, the Office of Policy and Management, and Legislators about the success BRS has had with its consumers and available resources to fund vocational rehabilitation programs

Business Partnership Committee

Purpose:

To enhance employment outcomes for people with disabilities, while providing timely focused service to their employers. To foster collaboration among all the related service providers and employers (public and private, for profit and non-profit) by assessing employer satisfaction with VR programs. To encourage coordinated training and orientation of employers, employees and co-workers and to determine and address the employment needs of business and industry.

Chairpersons:

Joyce Budd and Tom Savard

Members:

Maggie Boyce, Michael Krieger, Marty Mancuso, Mark Myers, and George Narvaez

2004 Accomplishments:

- Supported the Youth Leadership Forum with financial and in-kind resources
- Continued to research internship program for BRS consumers to provide a workplace experience (*budget constraints put this project on hold*)
- Initiated a meeting with Joe Carbone, CEO of the Southwestern Region Workforce Development Board
- Began dialogue with the Connecticut Business Leadership Network to develop an ex-officio seat on their Board of Directors for an SRC member

2005 Key Goals:

- Expand this committee in order to increase efforts to reach out to the business community
- Continue to seek a link between the SRC and the Connecticut Business Leadership Network
- Continue ongoing meetings with the Southwestern Region Workforce Development Board to seek ways to collaborate in reaching out to the private sector
- Gradually expand the Workforce Development Board outreach to other Regions
- Support the Youth Leadership Forum with financial and in-kind resources

Appointment to the State Rehabilitation Council

Members of the State Rehabilitation Council are appointed by the Governor of Connecticut. The membership includes representatives from the BRS consumer community, business and industry, community-based providers of vocational rehabilitation services, advocacy organizations, and state agencies that serve individuals with disabilities. A majority of the members of the Council have physical and/or mental disabilities.

The director of the designated state unit, which is the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services of the Connecticut Department of Social Services, serves ex-officio on the Council, as does a student representative.

Members of the State Rehabilitation Council

Chair - Linda Wallace, *Middletown*

Vice Chair - Jerry Koret, *Hamden*

Secretary - Tom Savard, *Easton*

Deputy Secretary - Kenn Messman, *Bridgeport*

Treasurer - Mark Myers, *Canton*

Nancy Blackwell-Todd, *Bridgeport* * Maggie Boyce, *Shelton*

Pearl Brooks, *Bridgeport* * Joyce Budd, *Shelton*

Margaret Cordeiro, *Milford* * Brita Darany, *Greenwich*

Nancy Dolan, *New Fairfield* * George Dowaliby, *Middletown*

John Esteves, *Stratford* * Lynn Goodrich, *New Britain*

Michael Krieger, *Pleasant Valley* * Morag MacDonald, *Bloomfield*

David Majeski, *Hartford* * Marty Mancuso, *Litchfield*

Heidi Mark, *Meriden* * George Narvaez, *New Haven*

Heather Leigh Northrop, *New Britain* * Libera Nosal, *Milford*

C. Kwame Ocansey, *Portland* * Lois Rosenwald, *Wallingford*

Ann Seigel, *West Hartford* * John Shea, *Hamden*

Diane Thompson, *Sandy Hook* * Mike Valuckas, *Waterbury*

Raymond Venter, *Willimantic* * Marybeth Waltman, *Rocky Hill*

Susan Werboff, *Hartford* * Linda Wheeler-Donahue, *Southbury*

Contacting the State Rehabilitation Council

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